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To the honorable Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian, thank you for allowing me to testify before the Appropriations Committee. My name is Andrea Gaines and I am a person in recovery.

I pursued recovery for over 20 years. There is no need for me to tell you a long story on how drugs destroyed my life I think my story would be more powerful telling you how I got into recovery and how I am staying in recovery on a daily basis.

In June of 2008, I decided to admit myself into another treatment facility. I've been to many treatment centers, but I decided this time I would be fully invested in my recovery not just listen. While listening to what I had heard so many other times it truly began to become a reality. My life was unmanageable and I was powerless over the disease of addiction.

When I completed the program, we had a graduation ceremony and this one counselor looks me in the eyes and told me that I needed to start loving myself before this process of recovery can start. On July 7, 2009 is when I started loving Andrea Gaines.

I heard about CCAR from a counselor. She informed me that this would be a good place for me to begin my recovery process outside of treatment. Treatment is a way to initiate recovery, but to maintain recovery I needed to take action. CCAR seemed like a place where I could begin this process.

When she mentioned she volunteered for this Recovery Program and how it helped her stay clean, I immediately started thinking "Volunteering" I need money now! I'm broke!

I decided that I need to take suggestion from other people who had walked the road of recovery before me. I wanted to stay clean. I was willing to change. The suggestion was CCAR. So, CCAR was where I was going.

When I arrived here, the atmosphere was so serene. I immediately felt comfortable. It was like a breath of fresh air, from the sewage my life had been in.

I immediately got involved with programs that were being offered. I participated in All Recovery meetings, became a volunteer and was trained to make Telephone Recovery Support calls. What a change from the life I used to lead. I was filled with hope not despair. I was finally beginning to believe I could do this, volunteering became my job, I loved it, the money could wait, I needed to learn how to be in recovery. I came to CCAR everyday. People would say why are you so committed, your only volunteering. My response would be "Why can't I just be saving my life."

One of the programs that I completed that I was very proud of was the R.O.E.S. program. (Recovery Oriented Employment Service). It was an 8 week workshop. Even though I had many jobs in my past, it was a while since I worked and I did need a refresher course. I needed help, doing a good resume, writing a powerful cover letter, dressing appropriately and the importance of attendance and job security. I completed this program and received a certificate of completion. It felt good starting something and actually finishing it.



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A job posting for a part-time administrative assistant became available at CCAR. I applied. I was granted an interview on December 4, 2008.

With the help of the ROES program Coordinator I prepared myself for this interview.

There is a story behind all my stories.

My past brought some issues that I had to face in my present. I knew I had an outstanding warrant, because of the support and encouragement I got from the CCAR staff, I actually did the right thing and turned myself in to the proper authorities. I was very scared, I was in recovery and the thought of facing jail time was discouraging, but I knew I had to do it.

Meanwhile I was being given the opportunity to interview for a part-time job at CCAR. On December 4, 2008 I was hired as the Administrative Assistant for the Hartford Recovery Center. I was ecstatic, I couldn't believe I was being given another chance. Imagine, that just 5 months ago I was told to come here to volunteer and now I was going to be an employee. Recovery Works! But there's a catch remember that outstanding warrant, well it was time to pay up. On December 5, 2008 I was sentenced to 75 days in York Correctional Facility. CCAR was fully aware of the potential for me to have to serve some time and they hired me anyways, they really understand what it means to be given a second chance. They saw something in me that I had not been able to see in a long time.

My point is: This Recovery Community Center is the best thing that ever happened to me so far. They knew my past and still gave me a chance for a new life. This center is very RECOVERY Friendly.

I have let others who are pursuing recovery know that there is a place where you can go, where you are not alone; where you will be treated with dignity and respect; where the environment is safe and nurturing.

In recovery, you hope that there could be a place where you can go and feel that you are not alone.

That place is CCAR. Recovery Community Center

As long as there is a place like this, I will never be alone. This is my home.

Please remember that if it had not been for CCAR's Hartford Recovery Community Center, I do not know where I might be today. Recovery has become a reality for me, and I hope you can see investing in recovery is a solution.

Andrea Gaines